



Summer Toolkit Getting Strategic About Main Street

Speaker Biographies & Contact Info

Lauren Adkins, Assistant Director for Field Services, National Trust Main Street Center

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Lauren began working for the National Trust National Main Street Center in 1991. Her work at the center currently focuses on brand management, partnership development, and managing the center's consulting services division, including marketing, staff supervision, budgeting, and client relations.

Lauren is a regular conference speaker and continues to provide consulting and training services. She has worked with hundreds of communities in 38 states, in addition to the District of Columbia, Canada, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Singapore. She has served as a faculty member at various Main Street conferences and workshops, speaking on topics such as retail promotion, volunteer management, fundraising, market analysis, and strategic planning. Lauren has authored several articles for *Main Street News* and served as a guest lecturer for Catholic University and George Washington University. Before joining the National Trust for Historic Preservation, she served as a Main Street manager in Benton, Arkansas and as the executive director for a neighborhood commercial district revitalization project in Arlington, Virginia.

Lauren holds a bachelors degree in art and archaeology from Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri and attended the Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation in New York, New York. She is a native of Hot Springs, Arkansas. Lauren is the granddaughter and daughter of "Main Street" merchants who owned Adkins Public Drug from 1934 to 1984, and her great, great, great, great, great grandparents opened the first general store in White County, Arkansas in the mid-nineteenth century.

Jessica Chase, Program Manager, Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance

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Jessica began volunteering with Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance (HDR) in 2006 and moved into her position as Program Manager in 2008. She now manages membership campaigns, volunteers, and fundraising events as well as downtown parking services. Along with Alexis Morehouse, she presented HDR promotional accomplishments at the 2009 National Main Streets Conference highlighting the use of online social networking tools. Jessica has her B.A. from James Madison University.

Todd Christensen, Deputy Director of Community Development, Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development

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As Deputy Director, Todd oversees the federal and state-funded community development construction programs, the Community Development Block Grant program, the Appalachian Regional Commission Program, the Indoor Plumbing Rehabilitation Program, the Virginia Main Street program, the Virginia Enterprise Zone Initiative, the Virginia Individual Development Accounts and the Virginia Rural Broadband Planning Initiative

In addition to his normal responsibilities, Todd has been involved in a number of innovative initiatives including developing "last mile" broadband capacity in rural Virginia; assisting communities, particularly in Southwest Virginia, in their economic restructuring efforts through downtown revitalization and cultural heritage tourism; playing a founding role in the initiation and development of The Crooked Road, Virginia's Heritage Music Trail and 'Round the Mountain: Southwest Virginia's Artisan Network; and planning Heartwood- Southwest Virginia's Artisan Gateway to be located in Abingdon.

In 2003, he received the Governor's Agency Star Award which is presented to the one state employee each year whose achievements most exemplify the mission of their agency. In 2008, Todd received an award for Innovation in Government from the Excellence in Virginia Government for his work with The Crooked Road and Southwest Virginia.

David Hoegerman, Search Engine Campaign Manager, Virginia Electronic Commerce Technology Center

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David is the Search Engine Campaign Manager and Marketing Specialist at Virginia Electronic Commerce Technology Center (VECTEC) where he provides small businesses with detailed analysis of their existing websites, as well as recommendations for improving their website rankings. He also provides guidance for teaching small businesses cost effective and practical methods of marketing their businesses through the Internet.

Jody Keenan, Director, Virginia Small Business Development Centers Network

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Jody was named Director of Virginia Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) Network hosted by George Mason University in 2003. She began her SBDC career as a graduate student while earning her MBA and later joined George Mason University as Director of the Northern Virginia SBDC, overseeing four local offices. Previously, she was the Deputy Director of Economic Development in Chester County, PA, a suburb of Philadelphia.

Jody has served the national SBDC network as Chair of the Association of Small Business Development Centers Board of Directors and on the Operations and Accreditation committees. She also serves on several statewide committees, including the Virginia Department of Business Assistance Entrepreneur Advisory Board and the Virginia Chamber of Commerce Small Business Committee. Jody earned her MBA at LaSalle University in Philadelphia and a B.S. degree from the College of William and Mary in Virginia.

Kevin Kelly, Managing Director, ECDC Enterprise Development Group

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Kevin is the Managing Director for the ECDC Enterprise Development Group (EDG), a subsidiary of the Ethiopian Community Development Council, Inc. in Arlington, Virginia, dedicated to helping low-to-moderate income people in the Washington Metropolitan area achieve independence and self-sufficiency.

Prior to joining EDG in February, Kevin served as Managing Director for Policy and Advocacy for the Association for Enterprise Opportunity, the national organization that represents the microenterprise field in the U.S. He has more than 28 years experience in community economic development, including 18 years with the National Congress for Economic Development, which was the national association for community development corporations. Kevin also served as a program officer for a national grantmaker and as a consultant to national non-profit organizations.

Kevin earned a bachelor's degree in political science from California State University at Fullerton and a master's degree in political science with a concentration in American politics from the American University in Washington D.C.,

Alexis Morehouse, Promotions Manager, Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance

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Alexis has worked with Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance (HDR) since 2006, first as a volunteer and then as promotions manager. She oversees media relations, event promotion, retail and restaurant initiatives, and downtown image campaigns. In 2009, she and co-worker Jessica Chase presented HDR's promotional accomplishments using online social networking tools at the National Main Streets Conference in Chicago. Alexis holds a bachelor's and a master's degree in public administration from James Madison University and spends her "down" time working for Harrisonburg's local National Public Radio station, Rosetta Stone, and singing in weddings.

Tripp Muldrow, Principal, Arnette Muldrow & Associates

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Tripp is a principal in the firm Arnett Muldrow & Associates in Greenville, South Carolina. A native of Greenville, Tripp is a 1996 graduate of Clemson University with a masters degree in City and Regional Planning. He started his career in the Economic Development Department of the City of Greenville where he worked on the revitalization of the City's West End Commercial District and coordinated historic preservation planning for the City.

In May of 2002, Tripp and his business partners Aaron Arnett and Ben Muldrow started their own firm concentrating on Town Planning, Historic Preservation, and Economic Development for small and medium sized communities. The firm has evolved a specialty niche in developing community branding and has completed branding projects in over eighty communities in eighteen states. Over the course of his career, Tripp has directed community revitalization projects in cities and towns including Leesburg, Virginia; Concord, North Carolina; the Mississippi Gulf Coast; and St. Albans, Vermont.

Tripp is the Immediate Past President of the SC Chapter of the American Planning Association, has served on the Faculty of the South Carolina Mayor's Institute for Community Design, served on the board of the South Carolina Main Street program, and was selected as part of a Kellogg Foundation grant delegation to study community and economic development in County Mayo, Ireland in 2003. He has spoken at the National Main Street conference on three occasions and at state conferences in Wisconsin, Illinois, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, and Mississippi.

He is also active in his own community as a member of Greenville's City Planning Commission and has served on the Leadership Greenville Board of Regents, as well as on the boards of the Historic Greenville Foundation, the Greenville Housing Authority and the Friends of the Reedy River. Tripp is married and has a four-year old son.

Caroline Nowery, Director, Women's Business Center, New Visions, New Ventures

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Caroline is responsible for the daily operations of the Women's Business Center (WBC), including the supervision of training, technical assistance and access to capital services, marketing and recruiting, program monitoring and reporting, and coordination with community partners. During her tenure as director, Caroline has been responsible for the continued growth of the WBC, increasing the number of clients served by more than 10% every year. In addition to leading the WBC, she also has served in leadership roles with the local Women's Business Consortium and has recently been accepted as a member of the Leadership of Metro Richmond class of 2010.

Prior to joining New Visions, New Ventures, Caroline owned and operated a small business, which she successfully sold in 2005. Prior to that, she managed a small family-owned business for five years.

Sarah F. Peveler, Senior Trainer, Partners for Sacred Places

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Sarah joined the staff of Partners for Sacred Places in May 1997 and served as its Director of Training until the fall of 2008 when she relocated to eastern North Carolina as Senior Trainer. Her work at Partners marks her "third" career including work as a Girl Scout professional in northern Virginia and the eastern panhandle of West Virginia. She pursued graduate studies in Public History and Historic Preservation at Middle Tennessee State University, received a B.A. in Sociology from Emory University, and completed the four-year *Education for Ministry* certificate program sponsored by the University of the South School of Theology.

She is responsible for training initiatives and the content, design, marketing, and delivery for Partners' national training venture, *New Dollars/New Partners for Your Sacred Place* in the southeastern US and Texas.

Deborah Wagner, Director of Community Economic Development, People Incorporated Financial Services

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Deborah has been with People Incorporated for 17 years and is experienced in all aspects of the business development and lending process. As director, Deborah is responsible for the day-to-day supervision of business services, program administration and compliance, and program goal achievement for People Incorporated Financial Services. She also oversees People Incorporated's IDA program, the Cars for Work program, and the administration of Ninth District Development Financing, Inc., a tourism development loan fund. Deborah works with funding partners in all aspects of the program and represents the program locally as well as at the state and national level. She provides general oversight for the program, monitors compliance with grant requirements, and supervises the staff members assigned to the program.

Her prior lending experience includes sixteen years with Dominion Bank. While at Dominion she served as collection supervisor and as lending officer. Deborah also served as Credit Manager for Lonesome Pine Hospital located in Big Stone Gap, Virginia. She attended Virginia Highlands Community College and King College, where she majored in Business Management.

Marc Willson, Retail Expert, Virginia Small Business Development Centers Network,

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Marc is currently the Retail Consultant at the Virginia Small Development Center (SBDC) Network at the George Mason University Mason Enterprise Center at The School of Public Policy. He brings 35 years of retail experience to bear in helping retail, restaurants and tourism-related small businesses refine and promote their concepts to the public. He conducts a series of seminars related to staying relevant to a changed customer and the fundamentals of retailing. He meets personally with small businesses throughout Virginia to provide confidential one-on-one counseling.

In 1975, Mr. Willson started his retail career as co-owner of the largest distributor of Earth Shoes in the United States. As Earth Shoes went the way of the pet rock, Mr. Willson joined Britches of Georgetowne as a sales person and finished his 12 year career there as Vice President of Operations after growing the company from 9 stores to 109. He then joined Circuit City and opened 83 mall based Circuit City Express stores. At Crown Books he managed 250 bookstores as Vice President and General Manager. The son of the founder of Circuit City asked him to be President and CEO of the Bicycle Exchange, a chain of bicycle superstores that he had invested in and was in dire need of a turnaround. He then took his career into cyberspace as the Vice President of Merchandising of an online college bookstore specializing in textbooks and emblematic apparel. As President of Storetrax, Inc., he managed an Internet site dedicated to landlords and developers leasing retail space.

Most recently he traveled to Dallas, Texas, to open the world's first energy efficiency store for Current Energy, LLC, a company funded by Ross Perot, Jr. The store helps small businesses and residential customers reduce their consumption of gas, water and electricity. He continues to broker commercial power to industry and manufacturers in deregulated states throughout the country.